

# Facts on Sugar Drink Consumption

## Pouring sugar into Americans' diets

- In 2013, the average American drank just over 38 gallons of soda a year—or about eight 12-ounce cans a week.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2011, beverage companies produced enough sugar drinks (e.g., sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweetened teas and coffees, and energy drinks) to provide an average of 45 gallons per American—or slightly more than nine 12-ounce cans a week.<sup>2</sup>
- Sugar drinks were the single-largest source of calories from added sugar in the American diet in 2010, providing an average of about five percent of total calories per person.<sup>3</sup>
- Sugar drinks accounted for 39 percent of all added sugars in the American diet in 2010.<sup>4</sup>
- According to 2009–2010 NHANES data, about 30 percent of adults consume at least one sugar drink per day.<sup>5</sup>

## Sugar drinks significant in teens' diets

- Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a top source of calories in children's and teens' diets, accounting for 118 calories per day.<sup>6</sup>
- For two to eighteen-year-olds, sugar drinks account for 60 percent of total daily calories from added sugar.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2015, 20 percent of high school students drank soda one or more times per day, 13 percent of students drank two or more, and 7 percent drank three or more.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2010, U.S. youth consumed an average of 155 calories from sugar-sweetened beverages, amounting to 8 percent of their daily calorie intake.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2008, five percent of children, 16 percent of adolescents, and 20 percent of young adults consumed more than 500 calories a day from sugar drinks—an amount equivalent to more than three 12-ounce cans.<sup>10</sup>

## How much is too much?

- A typical 12-ounce can of regular cola contains nearly 9 teaspoons of added sugars; a 20-ounce bottle contains 15.5 teaspoons of sugars.<sup>11</sup>
- The American Heart Association recommends a maximum daily intake of six teaspoons of added sugars for women and nine teaspoons for men.<sup>12</sup>
- For a 2,000 calorie diet, the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans consume no more than 50 grams, or about 12 teaspoons, of added sugar per day.<sup>13</sup>
- In 2008, teenage boys consumed an average of 273 calories a day from sugar drinks,

nearly twice the American Heart Association's recommended consumption of added sugars from all sources.<sup>14,15</sup>

### Industry's history of super-sizing

- The average soda sold in the United States has more than doubled in size since the 1950s, from 6.5 ounces to 16.2 ounces.<sup>16</sup>
- In 1955, a cup of Coca-Cola at McDonald's was seven ounces. Today, a children's size Coca-Cola at McDonald's is 12 ounces, and a medium is 21 ounces.<sup>17,18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jeon H. (2013). Fizzling out: Soda producers will refresh product lines to decelerate falling demand. *IbisWorld Industry Report*, 31211a.

<sup>2</sup> Andreyeva T, Chaloupka FJ, and Brownell KD. (2011). Estimating the potential of taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages to reduce consumption and generate revenue. *Am J Prev Med*, 52(6): 413-416.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010). *Dietary guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th Edition*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>4</sup> What We Eat in America (WWEIA). Food Category analyses for the 2015 Dietary Advisory Committee. Estimates based on day 1 dietary recalls from WWEIA, NHANES 2009-2010. Available at [https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/2015-2020\\_Dietary\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Kit BK, Fakhouri TH, Park S, et al. (2013). Trends in sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among youth and adults in the United States: 1999-2010. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 98(1): 180-188.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, op cit.

<sup>7</sup> Watowicz RP, Anderson SE, Kaye GL, and Taylor CA. (2015). Energy contribution of beverages in US children by age, weight, and consumer status. *Childhood Obesity*, 11(4): 475-483.

<sup>8</sup> Kann L, McManus T, Harris WA, et al. (2015). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States 2015. CDC. Available at [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506\\_updated.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506_updated.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Kit BK, Fakhouri TH, Park S, Nielsen SJ, Ogden CL. (2013). Trends in sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among youth and adults in the United States: 1999-2010. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 98(1):180-188.

<sup>10</sup> Han E and Powell LM. (2013). Consumption patterns of sugar-sweetened beverages in the United States. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 113(1): 43-53.

<sup>11</sup> National Nutrient Database. (2016). Basic Report: 14148, Beverages, carbonated, cola, regular. USDA. Available at [https://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/foods/show/92177?fgcd=&manu=The+Coca-Cola+Company&lfacet=&format=&count=&max=50&offset=&sort=fd\\_s&order=asc&qlookup=&ds=&qt=&qp=&qq=&qn=&q=&ing=](https://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/foods/show/92177?fgcd=&manu=The+Coca-Cola+Company&lfacet=&format=&count=&max=50&offset=&sort=fd_s&order=asc&qlookup=&ds=&qt=&qp=&qq=&qn=&q=&ing=).

<sup>12</sup> American Heart Association. (2016). Added sugars. Available at [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Added-Sugars\\_UCM\\_305858\\_Article.jsp#.WHZW71UrLcs](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Added-Sugars_UCM_305858_Article.jsp#.WHZW71UrLcs).

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. Cut down on added sugars. Available at [https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/DGA\\_Cut-Down-On-Added-Sugars.pdf](https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/DGA_Cut-Down-On-Added-Sugars.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Ogden CL, Kit BK, Carroll MD, Park S. (2011). Consumption of sugar drinks in the United States, 2005–2008. *NCHS Data Brief*, (71): 1-8.

<sup>15</sup> American Heart Association, op cit.

<sup>16</sup> Woodward-Lopez G, Kao J, and Ritchie L. (2011). To what extent have sweetened beverages contributed to the obesity epidemic? *Public Health Nutr*, 14(3): 499-509.

<sup>17</sup> Ghorayshi A. (2012). Too big to chug: How our sodas got so huge. *Mother Jones*. Available at <http://www.motherjones.com/media/2012/06/supersize-biggest-sodas-mcdonalds-big-gulp-chart>.

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<sup>18</sup> Just DR and Wansink B. (2014). One man's tall is another man's small: How the framing of portion size influences food choice. *Health Econ*, 23(7): 776–791.